

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2270

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 00163

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA F LINES 7 AND 8)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC,PINS,PINT,ET

SUBJECT: OVERVIEW OF PROVINCES

REFS: A. ADDIS 6423 (DTG 271444Z MAY 76)

B. ADDIS 7195 (DTG 141517Z JUN 76) NOTAL

C. ADDIS 7356 (DTG 180902Z JUN 76) NOTAL

D. ADDIS 7884 (DTG 011306Z JUN 76) NOTAL

E. ADDIS 8211 (DTG 091337Z JUL 76) NOTAL

F. ADDIS 8633 (DTG 201304Z JUL 76) NOTAL

G. ADDIS 9097 (DTG 031300Z AUG 76) NOTAL

1. REF G SUMMARIZED DISTURBANCES AND DISSIDENCE IN THE COUNTRY-

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SIDE AS OF AUGUST , 1976. THIS CABLE REPORTS PROVINCIAL EVENTS
SEPTEMBER THROUGH DECEMBER, SOME OF WHICH ARE CONTINUING. THE
SITUATION BY PROVINCE IS AS FOLLOWS:

A. ERITREA--ALL EPMG INITIATIVES TO SOLVE ERITREAN CONFLICT SO
FAR APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL. ALONG LINES OF 9-POINT
PEACE POLICY TOWARD ERITREA ANNOUNCED MAY, 1976, SPECIAL
COMMISSION WAS ESTABLISHED MID-OCTOBER (ADDIS ABABA 11201(NOTAL).

ALTHOUGH FIGHTING SEEMED TO TAPER OFF FROM SEPTEMBER TO MID-OCTOBER, IT RESUMED AGAIN IN MID-NOVEMBER. EXAMPLES ARE CONTINUING BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF NACFA, HIT-AND-RUN ATTACKS ON THE MASSAWA-ASMARA ROAD, APPARENT INABILITY TO MOVE ALONG MAJOR ROAD LINKING ASMARA AND MAJOR COTTON-PRODUCING AREA OF TESSENEY, AND REPLACEMENT OF SECOND DIVISION COMMANDING OFFICER. REPORTS CONTINUE TO REACH ADDIS OF SOME POLICE AND MILITARY DEFECTIONS. ALTHOUGH THERE NO CLEAR EVIDENCE OF ELF/PLF COLLABORATION ON POLITICAL FRONT, THERE APPEARS TO BE SOME MILITARY COOPERATION IN FIELD. ONE RELIABLE SOURCE IN ADDIS, WHEN QUESTIONED IN OCTOBER WHY MASSAWA-ASMARA ROAD HAD REMAINED RELATIVELY FREE OF GUERRILLA ATTACKS, ANSWERED ROAD PROVIDED MAJOR TRANSIT ROUTE FOR INSURGENT AS WELL AS EPMG SUPPLIES, AND ELF/PLF LIKELY TO ATTACK IT ONLY IF THEY FELT THEY COULD ACHIEVE MAJOR VICTORY IN FIELD. MOST RECENT ATTACKS IN EARLY AND MID-DECEMBER ON ASMARA-MASSAWA ROAD MAY INDICATE GROWING PERCEPTION BY ELF/PLF THAT FAVORABLE MILITARY SOLUTION POSSIBLE.

B. TIGRE--PAST REPORTS CITED TIGRE LIBERATION FRONT AS MAJOR INSURGENT GROUP IN PROVINCE. RELIABLE SOURCES REPORT TLF, BY INCORPORATING OTHER DISSIDENT ELEMENTS WITHIN TIGRE PROVINCE INTO THEIR GROUP, HAVE RENAMED THEMSELVES TIGRE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT (TPLF). IT APPEARS TPLF CONTROLS MOVEMENTS ALONG MAJOR ROUTE FROM INDE SELASSIE TO JUST OUTSIDE ADIG-RAT. HOWEVER, EPMG TROOPS STILL CONTROL MAJOR TOWNS AND HAVE ABILITY TO MOVE HEAVILY ARMED CONVOYS ALONG NORTH-SOUTH ROAD TO MEKELLE. RELIABLE SOURCES REPORT TPLF IN CONTROL OF MUCH OF COUNTRYSIDE. SEVERAL SOURCES ALSO REPORT TRAINING FOR ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY MILITARY WING (EPRA)
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AND MILITANT SUPPORTERS OF ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (EDU) TAKING PLACE IN TIGRE PROVINCE WITH ASSISTANCE OF TPLF.
C. BEGEMDIR--EMBASSY OFFICERS' TRIP TO PROVINCE IN OCTOBER NOTED LACK OF DISSIDENT ACTIVITY AND RECONFIRMED THEN CURRENT BELIEF OF RELATIVE PEACE THOROUGHOUT PROVINCE (ADDIS 11599 NOTAL). HOWEVER, SINCE BEINNING OF DECEMBER INSURGENT ACTIVITY HAS REACHED SIGNIFICANT LEVELS. THERE REPORTS OF BATTLES NEAR SUDAN BORDER AROUND METEMMA AND HUMERA AND MAJOR ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATION IN PROVINCIAL CAPTIAL OF GONDAR, WHICH ONE SOURCE REPORTES RESULTED IN DEATHS OF 12 STUDENTS AND 14 OTHERS WOUNDED. ANOTHER CONFRONTATION REPORTED IN AZEZO, 12 KILOMETERS NORTH OF GONDAR, AND THERE EVIDENCE OF EPRA ACTIVITEIS IN SEMIEN NATIONAL PARK AND NEARBY AREAS OF DEBARK AND DABAT. CONFRONTATIONS ALONG SUDAN BORDER AND IN GONDAR REPORTEDLY ACTION OF EDU. ALTHOUGH SOURCES DO NOT BELIEVE EDU AND EPRP HAVE COMBINED FORCES, IT APPEARS THEY HAVE TACIT UNDERSTANDING TO CONCENTRATE THEIR EFFORTS AGAINST DIRG FOR THE PRESENT, THUS RESULTING IN SOME COORDINATED MILITARY OPERATIONS.
D. WOLLO-RELIABLE SOURCES HAVE REPORTED LARGE DEPLOYMENT

OF GOVERNMENT TROOPS IN ALEMATA, NORTHERNMOST WOLLO TOWN SINCE BEGINNING OF OCTOBER. THEY HAVE CARRIED OUT OPERATIONS WEST OF ALEMATA INTO HIGHLANDS, WHICH ONE SOURCE REPORTS HAS LED TO DEATHS OF 1500 PEOPLE. (FIGURE BELIEVED SOMEWHAT INFLATED). INSURGENT ACTIVITY HAS INCREASED DURING PAST MONTHS IN NORTH AND NORTHWEST OF PROVINCE. IN OCTOBER BRITISH AMBASSADOR STRONGLY URGED NOT TO VISIT DESSIE, ALTHOUGH TRAVEL NOW PERMITTED. INSURGENT LEADERS DEJ. BERHANE-MESKEL DESTA AND KEGN.ABRAHA KASSA REMAIN AT LARGE AND APPEAR TO BE COOPERATING WITH EPRA. IT APPEARS HARVEST MAY BE NEGLIGIBLE IN NORTHERN PART OF PROVINCE, AND ONE SOURCE ALLEGES LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY ENTERED PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF DESSIE REQUESTING FOOD AND OTHER FORMS OF DROUGHT ASSISTANCE. THERE CONTINUE TO BE OCCASIONAL REPORTS OF AFAR LIBERATION FRONT (ALF) ACTIVITIES IN EASTERN PROVINCE,ALLEGEDLY SUPPORTED BY SOMALIS, AS WELL AS REPORTS OF TRADITIONAL INTERTRIBAL RAIDING BETWEEN AFARS AND ISSAS IN SOUTHEAST

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AND SOUTHCENTRAL WOLLO.

E. GOJJAM--INSURGENT ACTIVITY IN GOJJAM APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NEARLY NON-ESISTENT DURING PAST FOUR MONTHS. INSURGENT LEADERS TIRFE RETTA AND SIMEGNAH DESTA WHO ONCE APPEARED TO COMMAND SIZEABLE NUMBER OF MEN AND WEAPONS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN DRIVEN FROM THEIR FORMER AREAS OF SUPPORT BY EPMG FORCES, WITH MAJOR ASSISTANCE FROM LOCAL PEASANT MILITIA. AS REPORTE IT APPERAS HARVEST WILL BE EXCELLENT THROUGHOUT PROVINCE ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE PROBLEMS MARKETING GRAIN. WHILE PRESS CONTINUES TO REPORT CAPTURE OF OUTLAWS AND "SHIFTAS" THROUGHOUT COUNTRY, VERY LITTLE HAS APPEARED IN MEDIA ABOUT GOJJAMI OUTLAWS.

F. WOLLEGA-EMBASSY OFFICER CONVERSATION WITH US MISSIONARY REVELAED LITTLE DISSIDENT ACTIVITY AND GENERAL PEACE PREVAILING IN PROVINCE. HARVEST EXPECTED TO BE GENERALLY GOOD, WITH FARMERS NOT CUTTING BACK ON PRODUCTION. SCHOOLS HAVE REMAINED IN SESSION WITH NO REPORTS OF ANY MAJOR DIFFICULTIES. EMBASSY BELIEVES PROVINCE SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTING REFORMS OF ONGOING ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION.

G. SHOA--INSURGENT ACTIVITY OUTSIDE OF ADDIS HAS BEEN LIMITED DURING REPORTING PERIOD. SECURITY, ONCE EXTREMELY HEAVY ALL ALONG ROADS LEVING ADDIS, HAS GRADUALLY SLACKENED TO LEVEL WHERE CHECKPOINTS APPARENTLY MAINTAINED ONLY AT MAJOR ENTRY ROUTES TO CITY. MEANWHILE PRESS HAS REPORTED CAPTURE OF 5 OUTLAWS IN BETCHO DISTRICT SEPTEMBER 6TH, 12 OUTLAWS IN HAIKOCH AND BUTAJIRA DISTRICT OF SHOA SEPTEMBER 12TH, 10 OUTLAWS IN MERHABETE DISTRICT OCTOBER 28TH; 19 REACTIONARIES IN AMBO NOVEMBER 17TH. 7 LANDLORDS IN YIFATNA TIMUGA DISTRICT NOVEMBER 26TH; AND THE DEATH OF SHEWAN-DAGNE GEBREYES AND CAPTURE OF 5 ACCOMPLICES IN AMBO DECEMBER 9TM. ARRESTS AND KILLINGS OF THESE "SHIFTAS" HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED LARGELY BY PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS AND

MILITIA WITHOUT DIRECT ASSISTANCE FROM EPMG TROOPS.
H. HARRARGHE-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER TRIPS BY EMBOFFS TO DIRE

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USIA-06 SY-05 MCT-01 ACDA-07 OMB-01 AID-05 AGRE-00
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-----121431Z 017567 /65

R 121009Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2271
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 00163

DAWA AND HARAR, PRINCIPAL TOWNS HARRARGHE PROVINCE,
WERE UNEVENTFUL FROM SECUTITY VIEWPOINT. DIRE DAWA ONCE AN AL-
LEGED STRONGHOLD OF EPRP SEEMS NO LONGER TO BE SO. EMBASSY
CONTINUES TO BELIEVE TRAVEL ALONG LOW ROAD FROM ADDIS TO
HARAR UNSAFE FOR TOURIST TRAVEL BECAUSE OF BANDITRY, APPA-
RENTLY NOT POLITICALLY INSPIRED. INCIDENTS AT HARA EYE
CLINIC INVOLVING US NAVY MEDICAL PERSONNEL APPEAR NOT TO
HAVE BEEN POLITICALLY MOTIVATED. REPORTS OF HEAVY INSURGENT
ACTIVITIES IN OGADEN AND EASTERN PART OF PROVINCE HAVE PER-
SISTED THROUGHOUT 4-MONTH PERIOD. ONE BRITISH VETERINARIAN
TEAM TRAVELING SOUTH OF JIJIGA IN EASTERN PROVINCE WAS RE-
PORTEDLY ACCOMPANIED BY REGULAR SOMALI SOLDIERS AND REQUIRED
TO CHANGE ETHIOPIAN MONEY INTO SOMALI SHILLINGS, 80 KILOMETERS
INSIDE ETHIOPIAN BORDER. THIS MONDY EXCHANGE APPARENTLY NOT
NEW, HAVING BEEN GENERAL PRACTICE FOR SOME TIME.
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I. BALE-BALE INSURGENCY REPORTEDLY SUPPORTED BY SOMALIA, APPEARS TO HAVE INCREASED SINCE LAST REPORT (REFTEL G). THERE SEEMS TO BE GREATER CONCERN ABOUT SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL BALE AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF EPMG. EMBASSY UNSURE IF THIS NORMAL SEASONAL UPSWING RELATED TO NOMADIC MOVEMENTS INTO AREA OR REFLECTION OF INCREASED GSDR SUPPORT FOR INSURGENT ACTIVITIES OR BOTH. RELIABLE MIN OF INT SOURCE STATED MAJOR COMPLAINT OF EPMG TROOPS COMBATING INSURGENTS IS LACK OF MATERIAL SUCH AS AIRPLANES AND HEAVY WEAPONS TO COUNTER INSURGENT ACTIVITIES. PRESS REPORTS OF AUGUST 26 STATED 547 OUTLAWS SURRENDERED DURING WEEK; AUGUST 28 REPORTED 47 OUTLAWS KILLED; SEPTEMBER 4 REPORTED 14 KILLED; SEPTEMBER 7 REPORTED 75 SURRENDERED; SEPTEMBER 10 REPORTED 69 OUTLAWS "LIQUIDATED"; SEPTEMBER 14 REPORTED 157 SURRENDERED; NOVEMBER 21 REPORTED 15 SURRENDERED; DECEMBER 19 REPORTED SEVENTEEN KILLED. IT SHOULD BE NOTED PRESS REPORTS HAVE NOT INCLUDED REGULAR EPMG MILITARY CASUALTIES, WHICH SOME SOURCES BELIEVE HAVE BEEN HIGH AND IN RANGE 100-200. POSSIBILITY EXISTS EPMG CASUALTIES MAY HAVE BEEN HIGHER THAN THIS RANGE.

J. ARUSSI-- PROVINCE HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY QUIET. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE REPORTS FROM TIME TO TIME OF MINOR DIFFICULTIES IN SCHOOL SYSTEM, THESE APPEAR TO COME FROM FACT THAT EPRP ENJOYS DEGREE OF SUPPORT AMONG TEACHERS AND STUDENTS. HOWEVER, GOVERNMENT EASILY CONTROLLING SITUATION.

K. SIDAMO--MAJOR INSURGENT ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN HALF OF PROVINCE DURING AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL. EMBOFF CONVERSATION WITH PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS REVEALED ONLY TROUBLED AREA ALONG BALE BORDER AND ON ROAD SOUTHEAST OF NEGELLE TO SOMALIA FRONTIER. THROUGHOUT REPORTING PERIOD THERE LARGER NUMBER OF ARRESTS AND SURRENDERS OF OUTLAWS IN PROVINCE THAN IN PAST, BUT AS ADDIS ABABA 12142 (NOTAL) REPORTS, OVERALL SECURITY SITUATION SEEMS GOOD.

L. GEMU-GOFA--RELIABLE SOURCES REPORT NUMBER OF ARRESTS MADE BY MOBILE PMAC SECURITY TEAM DURING NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER. CONFIDENTIAL

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CEMBER APPARENTLY DIRECTED AT EPRP SYMPATHIZERS. NUMEROUS TRIPS BY AMERICANS TO PROVINCE HAVE BEEN FREE OF ANY PROBLEMS. IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED TRAVEL WITHIN PROVINCE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT EXCEPT FOR ONE JAOR ROAD IN EASTERNMOST PART OF PROVINCE.

M. KAFFA--RELATIVE CALM OF PROVINCE DISRUPTED IN DECEMBER BY ASSASSINATION OF DEPUTY POLITBURO MEMBER IN JIMMA. HIS FORMER CONNECTIONS TO EPRP AND SUBSEQUENT DEFECTION ARE THOUGHT TO BE MAJOR CAUSE OF ASSASSINATION. SITUATION APPEARS TO HAVE

RETURNED TO NORMAL.

N. ILLUBABOR--RECENT TRIP BY GROUP OF AMERICANS ALONG BARO RIVER PROVED UNEVENTFUL. THEY ENCOUNTERED NO SECURITY PROBLEMS IN AREA AND HAD FEELING PROVINCE WAS QUIET. DESPITE EXISTENCE OF SUDANESE REFUGEE CAMPS IN BAMBELA THEY DID NOT PERCEIVE ANY THREAT TO AREA FROM SUDAN.

2. COMMENT: DURING REPORTING PERIOD INSURGENT ACTIVITIES IN BALE, HARRARGHE, BEGEMDIR, TIGRE, AND ERITREA SEEM TO HAVE INCREASED IN VARYING DEGREES AFTER AUGUST-SEPTEMBER HARVEST LULL. HOWEVER, INSURGENT ACTIVITIES PREVIOUSLY REPORTED IN SIDAMO, GOJJAM AND SHOA HAVE DECREASED MARKEDLY. IT APPEARS THERE IS SOME COOPERATION BETWEEN EPRP AND EDU IN BEGEMDIR PROVINCE. REPORTS OF EPRP TROOPS IN SEMIEN MOUNTAINS AND EDU SUPPORTERS ALONG SUDAN BORDER AND METEMMA-GONDAR ROAD SEEM TO DEMONSTRATE TACIT UNDERSTANDING AMONG EDU AND EPRP TO ELIMINATE PMAC CONTROL WITHIN PROVINCE. WHILE EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE NO SINGLE OPPOSITION GROUP LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO DISLODGE PMAC FROM SEAT OF POWER, ACCUMULATION OF MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN AREAS DISTANT FROM CAPITAL TAKING TOLL AND SEVERELY STRETCHING EPMG MILITARY RESOURCES. RECENT ACCUSATIONS BY SUDANESE PRESIDENT NIMEIRI WHICH MAY CAUSE EPMG MILITARY PLANNERS TO DIVERT TROOPS FOR HYPOTHETICAL CONTINGENCIES ALONG SUDAN BORDER AND APPARENTLY INCREASED SOMALI SUPPORT FOR INSURGENTS ALONG ETHIOPIAN BORDER COULD RESULT IN FURTHER TASKING OF ALREADY OVERCOMMITTED EPMG FORCES. IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT ADDITIONAL FORCES EPMG COULD CALL ON AT PRESENT

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TO MET MAJOR STEP-UPS OF GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN ERITREA, TIGRE, OR ELSEWHERE WITHOUT LOSS OF OR REDUCTION IN SECURITY ELSEWHERE. LOW MORALE OF TROOPS IN ERITREA AND VARIOUS CAUSES WHICH INHIBIT EPMG FROM NEGOTIATING POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THERE CONTINUE TO DRAIN MILITARY RESOURCES. PERSISTENT ETHIOPIAN WORRIES OVER IMPENDING INDEPENDENCE OF DJIBOUTI ALSO STRAINING EPMG MILITARY OPERATIONAL CAPACITIES AS 3RD DIVISION TROOPS MUST BE GARRISONED IN DJIBOUTI BORDER AREAS RATHER THAN FIGHT INSURGENTS IN BALE.

3. GENERAL GUIDELINES EMBASSY GIVES TO PERSPECTIVE TOURISTS ARE, WESTERN ROAD TO ASMARA UNSAFE NORTH OF GONDAR AND SOMETIMES UNSAFE NORTH OF BAHR DAR, AS AT PRESENT. EASTERN ROAD TO ASMARA QUESTIONABLE NORTH OF DESSIE AND BELIEVE UNSAFE NORTH OF WOLDIYA. TRAVEL ON ROAD EAST OF DESSIE TO TENDAHO AND ASSAB CONSIDERED UNSAFE. LOW ROAD FROM MIESO TO HARA CONSIDERED UNSAFE, ALTHOUGH HIGH ROAD TO DIRE DAWA AND THEN HARAR SAFE. TRAVEL BEYOND HARAR TO JIJIGA ALSO CONSIDERED SAFE, HOWEVER NOT BEYOND JIJIGA. TRAVEL BEYOND GOBA, PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF BALE, CONSIDERED UNSAFE, AS IS EASTERN BRANCH OF MAIN ROAD TO KENYA WHICH PASSES THROUGH NEGHELLE.

WESTERN BRANCH TO KENYA WHICH PASSES THROUGH MOYALLE QUESTION-
ABLE AND NOT RECOMMENDED AT PRESENT FOR TRAVEL. SOUTHWESTERN
ROADS TO JIMMA AND ARBA MINCH APPEAR SAFE, AS DOES ROAD TO
AMBO AND LEKEMTE.
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